

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-01

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8758

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 1874

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BU, UK, PROP

SUBJECT: JAMMING OF THE BBC

REF: A) SOFIA 1598 (NOTAL); B) SOFIA 1600 (NOTAL)

1. BRITISH AMBASSADOR BOLLAND HAD A STORMY SESSION WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER PETROV OCT 15 WHEN HE TRIED TO OBTAIN LIFTING OF THE JAMMING OF BBC BULGARIAN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS. HE ARGUED THAT CONTINUED JAMMING WAS CONTRARY TO SPIRIT OF THE CSCE DISCUSSIONS, DISCRIMINATORY AFTER THE BULGARIANS HAD STOPPED JAMMING THE VOA, AND HARMFUL TO BULGARIAN-UK RELATIONS. BESIDES IT WAS INEFFECTIVE SINCE BULGARIANS LISTEN TO BBC RUSSIAN, ENGLISH AND SERBO-CROAT PROGRAMS AND JAMMING OF BULGARIAN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS EFFECTIVE ONLY IN SOFIA AREA.

2. HE GOT NOWHERE. PETROV RAISED THE MOST IRRELEVANT COUNTER-ARGUMENTS, SUCH AS "MEETINGS OKVEMIGRES" WHICH TOOK PLACE SOMEWHERE IN WESTERN EUROPE (NOT IN ENGLAND), "SLANDERS" BY RFE, AND WHEN PRESSED CLAIMED THAT THE DISCONTINUATION OF JAMMING OF VOA HAD BEEN SPECIAL SITUATION BECAUSE OF THE THEN IMMINENT VISIT OF DEPUTY PREMIER POPOV TO THE UNITED STATES. PETROV ALSO TRIED TO BARGAIN BY ASKING IF UK WOULD LIFT VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR BULGARIANS IF THE GOB STOPPED JAMMING THE
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BBC.

3. IN COURSE OF THIS CONVERSATION, PETROV (ACCORDING TO BOLLAND) CLAIMED THAT DISCONTINUANCE OF VOA JAMMING HAD BEEN PART OF AN "AGREEMENT" THAT THE US WOULD REFRAIN FROM UNFAVORABLE COMMENTS ON "BULGARIAN SOCIETY" (READ THE ZHIVKOV COMMUNIST REGIME). I TOLD BOLLAND THERE HAS BEEN NO SUCH DEAL. FOREIGN MINISTER FIRST INFORMED ME THAT BULGARIANS WOULD "TAKE MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE AUDIBILITY OF VOA" AND THEN HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT PROGRAMS WOULD BE "IN SPIRIT OF FAIRNESS AND DETENTE AND NOT OF HOSTILE PROPAGANDA". AT WORST ONE COULD READ THIS AS AN IMPLIED THREAT TO RESUME JAMMING IF OUR PROGRAMS ARE BELLIGERENTLY CRITICAL OF BULGARIAN POLICIES. HERZ

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